Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method for calculating adjusted preference information, comprising:

storing, in a computer memory storage system and for a plurality of consumers, preference information related to different attributes of a type of product, the stored preference information for an individual consumer including numerical values that are reflective of the individual consumer's preference for different attribute levels for the attributes of the type of product, and the plurality of consumers including a first consumer, a second consumer, and other consumers;

~~dividing~~ based on the stored preference information for the plurality of consumers dividing, using a processing device, the plurality of consumers into multiple different sub-groups ~~that include~~ of constituent members for whom similar preference information is determined to be stored in the computer memory storage system, each of the multiple different sub-groups including less than all of the plurality of consumers;

based on the preference information stored for the first consumer, ~~generating~~ generating, using a processing device, a first set of trade-off questions for the first consumer that solicit answers from the first consumer regarding choices between different attribute levels for attributes of the type of product;

providing the first set of trade-off questions to the first consumer;

~~predicting~~ predicting, using a processing device, the first consumer's answers to the first set of trade-off questions;

receiving answers to the first set of trade-off questions from the first consumer;

comparing preference information stored for the first consumer to information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of at least some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

based on results of comparing the preference information stored for the first consumer to the information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers, determining that the preference information stored for the first consumer is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of a first one of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

selecting, ~~from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers,~~ using a processing device, [[a]] the first sub-group of consumers from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers as a match for the first ~~consumer, the selection of the first sub-group of consumers being~~ consumer based on having determined that the preference information stored for the first consumer ~~and~~ is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers;

for at least one attribute level of a particular attribute of the type of product, ~~calculating~~ calculating, using a processing device, an average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level based on the stored values that are reflective of the first sub-group's constituent members' preferences for the at least one attribute level;

based on the first consumer's received answers to the first set of trade-off questions and the predicted answers to the first set of trade-off questions for the first consumer, ~~determining~~ determining, using a processing device, a first adjustment ~~factor~~ ratio for use in adjusting the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute ~~level;~~ level, the first adjustment ratio specifying proportions in which the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level are to be combined to adjust the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level;

~~adjusting~~ adjusting, using a processing device, the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level as a function of the determined first

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adjustment ~~factor~~ ratio and the average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute ~~level;~~ level by combining the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level with the average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level in the proportions for the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level specified by the first adjustment ratio;

based on the preference information stored for the second consumer, ~~generating~~ generating, using a processing device, a second set of trade-off questions for the second consumer that solicit answers from the second consumer regarding choices between different attribute levels for attributes of the type of product;

providing the second set of trade-off questions to the second consumer;

~~predicting~~ predicting, using a processing device, the second consumer's answers to the second set of trade-off questions;

receiving answers to the second set of trade-off questions from the second consumer;

comparing preference information stored for the second consumer to information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of at least some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

based on results of comparing the preference information stored for the second consumer to the information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers, determining that the preference information stored for the second consumer is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of a second one of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

selecting, ~~from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers,~~ using a processing device, [[a]] the second sub-group of consumers from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers as a match for the second ~~consumer, the selection of the second sub-group of consumers being~~ consumer based on having determined that the preference information stored for the second user

~~and~~ is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of the second sub-group of consumers;

for the at least one attribute level, ~~calculating~~ calculating, using a processing device, an average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level based on the stored values that are reflective of the second sub-group's constituent members' preferences for the at least one attribute level;

based on the second consumer's received answers to the second set of trade-off questions and the predicted answers to the second set of trade-off questions for the second consumer, ~~determining~~ determining, using a processing device, a second adjustment ~~factor~~ ratio for use in adjusting the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level, wherein the second adjustment ~~factor~~ ratio is different than the first adjustment ~~factor;~~ ratio and specifies proportions in which the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level are to be combined to adjust the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level; and

~~adjusting~~ adjusting, using a processing device, the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level as a function of the determined second adjustment ~~factor~~ ratio and the average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute ~~level.~~ level by combining the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level with the average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level in the proportions for the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level specified by the second adjustment ratio.

2. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the preference information for the plurality of consumers includes normalized part worth values.

3. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 2, wherein the preference for the plurality of consumers includes currency-normalized part worth values.

4. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein selecting the first sub-group of consumers includes selecting the first sub-group of consumers based on attribute levels identified as unacceptable by constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers.

5. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 4, wherein the constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers identified similar attribute levels as unacceptable.

6. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein selecting the first sub-group of consumers includes selecting the first sub-group of consumers based on part worth values stored for constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers.

7. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 6, wherein the constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers are associated with similar preference information.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein dividing the plurality of consumers into sub-groups includes assigning consumers to sub-groups based on attribute levels that the consumers indicated as unacceptable.

10. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein dividing the plurality of consumers into sub-groups includes assigning consumers to sub-groups based on part worth values associated with the consumers.

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11-12. (Canceled)

13. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, further comprising: determining an offer to sell a product based on the mixed preference information.

14. (Original) A method according to Claim 13, further comprising:
providing the offer to the consumer.

15. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the first sub-group of consumers is identical to the second sub-group of consumers.

16. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the first sub-group of consumers does not include any consumers belonging to the second sub-group of consumers.

17. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein one or more of the constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers are members of the second sub-group of consumers.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the plurality of consumers comprises a predetermined number of past consumers for whom preference information is stored.

20. (Original) A method according to Claim 19, wherein the predetermined number of past consumers are determined based on a time at which preference information associated with each of the predetermined number of consumers was collected.

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21. (Original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the plurality of consumers comprises all past consumers for whom preference information was collected during a particular time period.

22. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method for calculating adjusted preference information, comprising:

storing, in a computer memory storage system and for a plurality of consumers, preference information related to different attributes of a type of product, the stored preference information for an individual consumer including numerical values that are reflective of the individual consumer's preference for different attribute levels for the attributes of the type of product, and the plurality of consumers including a particular consumer and other consumers;

dividing based on the stored preference information for the plurality of consumers dividing, using a processing device, the plurality of consumers into multiple different sub-groups that include of constituent members for whom similar preference information is determined to be stored in the computer memory storage system, each of the multiple different sub-groups including less than all of the plurality of consumers;

based on the preference information stored for the particular consumer, generating generating, using a processing device, a set of trade-off questions for the particular consumer that solicit answers from the particular consumer regarding choices between different attribute levels for attributes of the type of product;

providing the set of trade-off questions to the particular consumer;

predicting predicting, using a processing device, the particular consumer's answers to the set of trade-off questions;

receiving answers to the set of trade-off questions from the particular consumer;

comparing preference information stored for the particular consumer to information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of at least some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

based on results of comparing the preference information stored for the particular
consumer to information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of some of
the multiple sub-groups of consumers, determining that the preference information stored for the
particular consumer is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of a
particular one of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

selecting, from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers, using a processing device,
[[a]] the particular sub-group of consumers from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers as
a match for the particular consumer, the selection of the particular sub-group of consumers being
consumer based on having determined that the preference information stored for the particular
consumer and is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of the
particular sub-group of consumers;

for at least one attribute level of a particular attribute of the type of product, calculating
calculating, using a processing device, an average value of the particular sub-group's preference
for the at least one attribute level based on the stored values that are reflective of the particular
sub-group's constituent members' preferences for the at least one attribute level;

based on the particular consumer's received answers to the set of trade-off questions and
the predicted answers to the set of trade-off questions for the particular consumer, determining
determining, using a processing device, an adjustment factor ratio for use in adjusting the stored
value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level;
level, the adjustment ratio specifying proportions in which the stored value that is reflective of
the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of
the particular sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level are to be combined to
adjust the stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least
one attribute level; and

adjusting adjusting, using a processing device, the stored value that is reflective of the
particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level as a function of the
determined adjustment factor ratio and the average value of the particular sub-group's preference
for the at least one attribute level. level by combining the stored value that is reflective of the

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particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level with the average value of the particular sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level in the proportions for the stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the particular sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level specified by the adjustment ratio.

23-26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 22, wherein selecting the particular sub-group of consumers includes selecting the particular sub-group of consumers based on attribute levels indicated as unacceptable by constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers.

28. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 27, wherein the constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers identified similar attribute levels as unacceptable.

29. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 22, wherein selecting the particular sub-group of consumers includes selecting the particular sub-group of consumers based on part worth values associated with each of the constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers.

30. (Previously presented) A method according to Claim 29, wherein the constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers are associated with similar part worth values.

31. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method for calculating adjusted consumer preference information, comprising:

receiving, for a plurality of consumers, preference information related to different

attributes of a product, the received preference information for an individual consumer including

numerical values that are reflective of the individual consumer's preference for different attribute

levels for the attributes of the type of product, and the plurality of consumers including a

particular consumer and other consumers;

currency-normalizing the received preference information for the plurality of consumers;

~~storing~~ storing, in a computer memory storage system, the currency-normalized

preference information for the plurality of consumers;

~~dividing~~ based on the stored, currency-normalized preference information for the

plurality of consumers, dividing, using a processing device, the plurality of consumers into

multiple different sub-groups ~~that include~~ of constituent members for whom similar currency-

normalized preference information is determined to be stored in the computer memory storage

system, each of the multiple different sub-groups including less than all of the plurality of

consumers;

based on the currency-normalized preference information stored for the particular

consumer, ~~generating~~ generating, using a processing device, a set of trade-off questions for the

particular consumer that solicit answers from the particular consumer regarding choices between

different attribute levels for attributes of the type of product;

providing the set of trade-off questions to the particular consumer;

~~predicting~~ predicting, using a processing device, the particular consumer's answers to the

set of trade-off questions;

receiving answers to the set of trade-off questions from the particular consumer;

comparing currency-normalized preference information stored for the particular

consumer to information that is reflective of the currency-normalized preferences of constituent

members of at least some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

based on results of comparing the currency-normalized preference information stored for

the particular consumer to information that is reflective of the currency-normalized preferences

of constituent members of some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers, determining that the

currency-normalized preference information stored for the particular consumer is similar to currency-normalized preference information stored for constituent members of a particular one of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

selecting, ~~from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers,~~ using a processing device, [[a]] the particular sub-group of consumers from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers as a match for the particular ~~consumer, the selection of the particular sub-group of consumers being~~ consumer based on having determined that the currency-normalized preference information stored for the particular consumer ~~and~~ is similar to currency-normalized preference information stored for constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers;

for at least one attribute level of a particular attribute of the type of product, ~~calculating~~ calculating, using a processing device, an average value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level based on the stored currency-normalized values that are reflective of the particular sub-group's constituent members' currency-normalized preferences for the at least one attribute level;

based on the particular consumer's received answers to the set of trade-off questions and the predicted answers to the set of trade-off questions for the particular consumer, ~~determining~~ determining, using a processing device, an adjustment ~~factor~~ ratio for use in adjusting the currency-normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute ~~level;~~ level, the adjustment ratio specifying proportions in which the currency-normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level are to be combined to adjust the currency-normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level; and

~~adjusting~~ adjusting, using a processing device, the stored currency-normalized value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level as a function of the determined adjustment ~~factor~~ ratio and the average value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute ~~level.~~ level

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by combining the currency-normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level with the average value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level in the proportions for the currency-normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level specified by the adjustment ratio.

32. (Original) A method according to Claim 31, further comprising:
providing an offer based on the currency-normalized information.

33. (Original) A method according to Claim 32, further comprising:
providing the offer to the consumer.

34. (Withdrawn) A method, in a system to collect consumer preference information, for determining consumer trade-off questions based on a plurality of attribute levels, each of the plurality of attribute levels being associated with an attribute and a part worth utility value, the method comprising:
grouping the attribute levels into objects including two attribute levels, each of the two attribute levels of an object being associated with different attributes; and
grouping the objects into pairs including two objects, a first object of a pair including a first two attribute levels associated with two attributes and a second object of the pair including a second two attribute levels associated with the two attributes; and
selecting, from the pairs, a plurality of pairs on which to base trade-off questions, wherein a first pair is more likely to be selected than a second pair if a sum of part worth utility values associated with each attribute level of the first pair is greater than a sum of part worth utility values associated with each attribute level of the second pair.

35-38. (Canceled)

39. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium storing ~~processor-executable~~ ~~process steps, the process steps comprising:~~ <u>instructions that, when executed by a processor,</u> <u>cause the processor to:</u>

~~a step to~~ store, for a plurality of consumers, preference information related to different attributes of a type of product, the stored preference information for an individual consumer including numerical values that are reflective of the individual consumer's preference for different attribute levels for the attributes of the type of product, and the plurality of consumers including a first consumer, a second consumer, and other consumers;

~~a step to~~ <u>based on the stored preference information for the plurality of consumers,</u> divide the plurality of consumers into multiple different sub-groups ~~that include~~ <u>of constituent members</u> <u>for whom similar preference information is determined to be stored, each of the multiple</u> <u>different sub-groups including</u> less than all of the plurality of consumers;

~~a step to~~ generate, based on the preference information stored for the first consumer, a first set of trade-off questions for the first consumer that solicit answers from the first consumer regarding choices between different attribute levels for attributes of the type of product;

~~a step to~~ provide the first set of trade-off questions to the first consumer;

~~a step to~~ predict the first consumer's answers to the first set of trade-off questions;

~~a step to~~ receive answers to the first set of trade-off questions from the first consumer;

<u>compare preference information stored for the first consumer to information that is</u> <u>reflective of the preferences of constituent members of at least some of the multiple sub-groups</u> <u>of consumers;</u>

<u>based on results of comparing the preference information stored for the first consumer to</u> <u>the information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of some of the</u> <u>multiple sub-groups of consumers, determine that the preference information stored for the first</u> <u>consumer is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of a first one of the</u> <u>multiple sub-groups of consumers;</u>

a step to select, from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers, [[a]] the first sub-group of consumers as a match for the first consumer, the selection of the first sub-group of consumers being consumer based on having determined that the preference information for the first consumer and is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers;

a step to calculate, for at least one attribute level of a particular attribute of the type of product, an average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level based on the stored values that are reflective of the first sub-group's constituent members' preferences for the at least one attribute level;

a step to determine, based on the first consumer's received answers to the first set of trade-off questions and the predicted answers to the first set of trade-off questions for the first consumer, a first adjustment factor ratio for use in adjusting the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level; level, the first adjustment ratio specifying proportions in which the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level are to be combined to adjust the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level;

a step to adjust the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level as a function of the determined first adjustment factor ratio and the average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level; level by combining the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level with the average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level in the proportions for the stored value that is reflective of the first consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the first sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level specified by the first adjustment ratio;

based on the preference information stored for the second consumer, generate a second set of trade-off questions for the second consumer that solicit answers from the second consumer regarding choices between different attribute levels for attributes of the type of product;

a step to provide the second set of trade-off questions to the second consumer;

a step to predict the second consumer's answers to the second set of trade-off questions;

receiving receive answers to the second set of trade-off questions from the second consumer;

compare preference information stored for the second consumer to information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of at least some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

based on results of comparing the preference information stored for the second consumer to information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers, determine that the preference information stored for the second consumer is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of a second one of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

a step to select, from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers, [[a]] the second sub-group of consumers as a match for the second consumer, the selection of the second sub-group of consumers being consumer based on having determined that the preference information stored for the second consumer and is similar to the preference information stored for constituent members of the second sub-group of consumers;

a step to calculate, for the at least one attribute level, an average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level based on the stored values that are reflective of the second sub-group's constituent members' preferences for the at least one attribute level;

a step to determine, based on the second consumer's received answers to the second set of trade-off questions and the predicted answers to the second set of trade-off questions for the second consumer, a second adjustment factor ratio for use in adjusting the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level, wherein the second adjustment factor ratio is different than the first adjustment factor; ratio and specifies proportions in which the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the second sub-group's preference for the

at least one attribute level are to be combined to adjust the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level; and

a step to adjust the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level as a function of the determined second adjustment factor and the average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level. level by combining the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level with the average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level in the proportions for the stored value that is reflective of the second consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the second sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level specified by the second adjustment ratio.

40. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 39, wherein the preference information for the plurality of consumers comprise normalized part worth values.

41. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 40, wherein the preference information for the plurality of consumers comprise currency-normalized part worth values.

42. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 39, wherein the [[step]] instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to select the first sub-group of consumers includes a step include instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to select the first sub-group of consumers based on attribute levels identified as unacceptable by each of the constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers.

43. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 42, wherein the constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers identified similar attribute levels as unacceptable.

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44. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 39, <u>wherein the</u> <s>step to</s> <u>instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to</u> select the first sub-group of consumers <s>includes a step</s> <u>include instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor</u> to select the first sub-group of consumers based on part worth values associated with each of the constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers.

45. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 44, wherein the constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers are associated with similar preference information.

46. (Canceled)

47. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim [[46,]] <u>39,</u> wherein the [[step]] <u>instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor</u> to divide the plurality of consumers into <u>multiple different</u> sub-groups <s>includes a step</s> <u>include instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor</u> to assign consumers to sub-groups based on attribute levels that the consumers indicated as unacceptable.

48. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim [[46,]] <u>39,</u> wherein the [[step]] <u>instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor</u> to divide the plurality of consumers into <u>multiple different</u> sub-groups <s>includes a step</s> <u>include instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor</u> to assign consumers to sub-groups based on part worth values associated with the consumers.

49-50. (Canceled)

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51. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 39, ~~the~~ ~~process steps further comprising:~~ <u>the computer-readable medium further storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:</u>

~~a step to~~ determine an offer to sell a product based on the mixed preference information.

52. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 51, ~~the~~ ~~process steps further comprising:~~ <u>the computer-readable medium further storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:</u>

~~a step to~~ provide the offer to the consumer.

53. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 39, wherein the first sub-group of consumers is identical to the second sub-group of consumers.

54. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 39, wherein the first sub-group of consumers does not include any consumers belonging to the second sub-group of consumers.

55. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 39, wherein one or more of the constituent members of the first sub-group of consumers belong to the second sub-group of consumers.

56. (Canceled)

57. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 39, wherein the plurality of consumers comprises a predetermined number of past consumers for whom preference information is stored.

58. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 57, wherein the predetermined number of past consumers are determined based on a time at which preference information associated with each of the predetermined number of consumers was collected.

59. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 39, wherein the plurality of consumers comprises all past consumers for whom preference information was collected during a particular time period.

60. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium storing ~~processor-executable~~ ~~process steps, the process steps comprising:~~ <u>instructions that, when executed by a processor,</u> <u>cause the processor to:</u>

~~a step to~~ store, for a plurality of consumers, preference information related to different attributes of a type of product, the stored preference information for an individual consumer including numerical values that are reflective of the individual consumer's preference for different attribute levels for the attributes of the type of product, and the plurality of consumers including a particular consumer and other consumers;

~~dividing~~ <u>based on the stored preference information for the plurality of consumers, divide</u> the plurality of consumers into multiple different sub-groups ~~that include~~ <u>of constituent members</u> <u>for whom similar preference information is determined to be stored, each of the multiple</u> <u>different sub-groups including</u> less than all of the plurality of consumers;

based on the preference information stored for the particular consumer, ~~generating~~ <u>generate</u> a set of trade-off questions for the particular consumer that solicit answers from the particular consumer regarding choices between different attribute levels for attributes of the type of product;

~~a step to~~ provide the set of trade-off questions to the particular consumer;

~~a step to~~ predict the particular consumer's answers to the set of trade-off questions;

~~a step to~~ receive answers to the set of trade-off questions from the particular consumer;

compare preference information stored for the particular consumer to information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of at least some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

based on results of comparing the preference information stored for the particular consumer to the information that is reflective of the preferences of constituent members of some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers, determine that the preference information stored for the particular consumer is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of a particular one of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

a step to select, from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers, [[a]] the particular sub-group of consumers as a match for the particular consumer, the selection of the particular sub-group of consumers being consumer based on having determined that the preference information stored for the particular consumer and is similar to preference information stored for constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers;

a step to calculate, for at least one attribute level of a particular attribute of the type of product, an average value of the particular sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level based on the stored values that are reflective of the particular sub-group's constituent members' preferences for the at least one attribute level;

based on the particular consumer's received answers to the set of trade-off questions and the predicted answers to the set of trade-off questions for the particular consumer, determining determine an adjustment factor ratio for use in adjusting the stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level; level, the adjustment ratio specifying proportions in which the stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the particular sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level are to be combined to adjust the stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level; and

adjusting adjust the stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level as a function of the determined adjustment factor ratio and the average value of the particular sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level. level by

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combining the stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level with the average value of the particular sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level in the proportions for the stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the particular sub-group's preference for the at least one attribute level specified by the adjustment ratio.

61-64. (Canceled)

65. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 60, wherein the [[step]] instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to select the particular sub-group of consumers includes a step of selecting include instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause a processor to select the particular sub-group of consumers based on attribute levels indicated as unacceptable by each constituent member of the particular sub-group of consumers.

66. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 65, wherein the constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers identified similar attribute levels as unacceptable.

67. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 60, wherein the step instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to select the particular sub-group of consumers includes a step of selecting include instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to select the particular sub-group of consumers based on part worth values associated with each of the constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers.

68. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium according to Claim 67, wherein the constituent members of the particular sub-group of consumers are associated with similar part worth values.

69. (Currently amended) A <u>computer-readable</u> medium storing ~~processor-executable~~ ~~process steps to produce consumer preference information, the process steps comprising:~~ <u>instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:</u>

~~a step to~~ receive, for a plurality of consumers, preference information related to different attributes of a product, the received preference information for an individual consumer including numerical values that are reflective of the individual consumer's preference for different attribute levels for the attributes of the type of product, and the plurality of consumers including a particular consumer and other consumers;

~~a step to~~ currency-normalize the received preference information for the plurality of consumers;

~~a step to~~ store the currency-normalized preference information for the plurality of consumers;

~~a step to~~ <u>based on the stored, currency-normalized preference information for the plurality of consumers,</u> divide the plurality of consumers into multiple different sub-groups ~~that include~~ <u>of constituent members for whom similar currency-normalized preference information is determined to be stored, each of the multiple different sub-groups including</u> less than all of the plurality of consumers;

~~a step to~~ generate, based on the currency-normalized preference information stored for the particular consumer, a set of trade-off questions for the particular consumer that solicit answers from the particular consumer regarding choices between different attribute levels for attributes of the type of product;

~~a step to~~ provide the set of trade-off questions to the particular consumer;

~~a step to~~ predict the particular consumer's answers to the set of trade-off questions;

~~a step to~~ receive answers to the set of trade-off questions from the particular consumer;

compare currency-normalized preference information stored for the particular consumer

to information that is reflective of the currency-normalized preferences of constituent members

of at least some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

based on results of comparing the currency-normalized preference information stored for

the particular consumer to the information that is reflective of the currency-normalized

preferences of constituent members of some of the multiple sub-groups of consumers, determine

that the currency-normalized preference information stored for the particular consumer is similar

to currency-normalized preference information stored for constituent members of a particular

one of the multiple sub-groups of consumers;

a step to select, from among the multiple sub-groups of consumers, [[a]] the particular

sub-group of consumers as a match for the particular consumer, the selection of the particular

sub-group of consumers being consumer based on having determined that the currency-

normalized preference information stored for the particular consumer and is similar to currency-

normalized preference information stored for constituent members of the particular sub-group of

consumers;

a step to calculate, for at least one attribute level of a particular attribute of the type of

product, an average value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at

least one attribute level based on the stored currency-normalized values that are reflective of the

particular sub-group's constituent members' currency-normalized preferences for the at least one

attribute level;

a step to determine, based on the particular consumer's received answers to the set of

trade-off questions and the predicted answers to the set of trade-off questions for the particular

consumer, an adjustment factor ratio for use in adjusting the currency-normalized stored value

that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one

attribute level; level, the adjustment ratio specifying proportions in which the currency-

normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized

preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the particular sub-group's

currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level are to be combined to adjust

the currency-normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level; and

a step to adjust the stored currency-normalized value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level as a function of the determined adjustment factor ratio and the currency-normalized value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level. level by combining the currency-normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level with the average value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level in the proportions for the currency-normalized stored value that is reflective of the particular consumer's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level and the average value of the particular sub-group's currency-normalized preference for the at least one attribute level specified by the adjustment ratio.

70. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 69, the process steps further comprising: computer-readable medium further storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

a step to provide an offer based on the currency-normalized information.

71. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium according to Claim 70, the process steps further comprising: computer-readable medium further storing instructions that, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

a step to provide the offer to the consumer.

72-77. (Canceled)